



United States Department of Energy

Office of Public Affairs

Washington, D.C. 20585

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For Immediate Release

July 20, 2007

DOE to Weigh Alternatives for Greater Than Class C Low-Level Waste Disposal

WASHINGTON, DC – The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) today announced that it will evaluate disposal options for Greater Than Class C (GTCC) low-level radioactive waste (LLW) generated from the decommissioning of nuclear power plants, medical activities and nuclear research. DOE delivered to the Federal Register this week a Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), which will evaluate how and where to safely dispose of GTCC LLW that is currently stored at commercial nuclear power plants and other generator sites across the country. The Energy Policy Act of 2005 requires DOE to report to Congress on its evaluation of safe disposal options for this commercial waste.

The NOI includes a list of the preliminary disposal options for analysis in the EIS, describes the inventory of waste to be analyzed, identifies dates and locations of public meetings, and invites public comments on the proposed scope of the EIS.

GTCC waste is commercial LLW generated from activities conducted by Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) licensees and stored at sites where it is generated throughout the United States. DOE estimates the total stored and projected quantity nationwide of the GTCC LLW to be 2,600 cubic meters. GTCC LLW is grouped into three general waste types: (1) activated metals, which come from the maintenance and decommissioning of nuclear power plants; (2) radioactive sealed sources that are no longer used, including irradiation of food and medical purposes; and (3) miscellaneous waste, such as contaminated equipment from industrial research and development.

In addition to the GTCC LLW, DOE intends to include in the EIS evaluation certain LLW and transuranic waste that is generated from DOE activities, which may not have an identified disposal path, and has characteristics similar to GTCC LLW. This DOE waste is estimated to be 3,000 cubic meters.

Regulations require that GTCC waste be disposed of in a geologic repository unless alternate proposals for its safe disposal in a NRC licensed facility are approved by the NRC. DOE will evaluate a range of disposal alternatives in preparing the EIS to meet the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act. In addition, DOE will submit a Report to Congress after the final EIS is complete and await Congressional action before making a decision on the disposal alternative or alternatives to be implemented by DOE as required by the Energy Policy Act of 2005.

The EIS will evaluate a range of disposal methods and locations that include: (1) geologic disposal at the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant and the proposed Yucca Mountain Repository; (2) enhanced near-surface

disposal at the Hanford Site, Idaho National Laboratory, Los Alamos National Laboratory, Nevada Test Site, Oak Ridge Reservation, Savannah River Site, Waste Isolation Pilot Plant vicinity, or a generic commercial location; and (3) intermediate depth borehole disposal at the same locations identified in (2). The EIS will consider these alternatives individually and in combination.

DOE invites public review and comment on the proposed scope of the EIS and other information presented in the NOI during a 60-day comment period, which begins on Monday, July 23, 2007. Comments are on September 21, 2007. All comments received during the public scoping period will be considered in preparing the GTCC EIS.

To encourage public participation in the GTCC EIS process, DOE will host scoping meetings, as follows:

August 13	Carlsbad, NM
August 14	Los Alamos, NM
August 22	Oak Ridge, TN
August 23	North Augusta, SC
August 27	Troutdale, OR
August 28	Pasco, WA
August 30	Idaho Falls, ID
September 4	Las Vegas, NV
September 10	Washington, D.C.

Additional information on Greater than Class C waste and the Notice of Intent are available on the [Greater than Class C EIS Information Center](#).

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